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MR. WEBSTER AND HIS REVILERS.

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MR. WEBSTER AND HIS REVILERS.

[It having been suggested to the Editors of the Intelligencer that the article in their paper of the 24th of April, headed "*Mr. Webster and his Revilers,*" and principally copied from the New York Express, might be useful to the cause of truth and public justice if circulated in pamphlet form, they have yielded to the suggestion, and issue the article in that form.]

FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER OF APRIL 24, 1841.

It is the practice of demagogues in all free Governments to seek the direction of public opinion by keeping alive old prejudices, or exciting new ones. In no country has this artifice been more freely or frequently resorted to than in our own, nor by any party in it so systematically and intolerantly as by that which has sprung up of late years and assumed to itself the name of *democratic*, but which, so far from possessing the elements of true and enlightened democracy, is imbued and guided by the very spirit of despotism. Let any man have labored as long or as signally as he may in support of the rights of his country, of the national prosperity, of the Constitution and of public liberty—let his whole career have been marked by public usefulness, and his patriotism be as unblemished as the sun—these shall all weigh as nothing in the scale if he stand in the way of disappointed office-seekers, or of ambitious and aspiring partisans. Can nothing better be found to serve the ends of party rancor, he shall, though he be patriotism and purity personified, be hunted down and sacrificed, without scruple or remorse, to superannuated prejudices, or mere political abstractions. There is not one among the men whose names adorn the annals of our country, who has

suffered more from this species of injustice than the present Secretary of State. This eminent citizen, whose name, in the most remote regions of the globe, sheds a lustre on the fame of his country, is at home assailed with all the malevolence of an intolerant faction, on the score of political incidents which took place before one-half of our readers were born, and which, whatever were their merit, ought, after such a lapse of time, to be considered, upon any fair construction, as barred by the statute of limitations from any title to a place in political controversies of the present day. We had occasion to say the same thing not much more than six months ago, when an assault of this sort was made, and justly rebuked by public opinion, on the occasion of Mr. WEBSTER's visit to the city of Richmond. Nor was it any new opinion of ours; for it was, upon an occasion which then offered, expressed with equal confidence six years ago, and has been entertained by us, with the same earnestness of conviction, more than twenty years gone by. It is preposterous to be ripping up any man's life for thirty or forty years, to discover whether at some time or other he has not differed in opinion from some other man or men who have long since gone down to the home of all the living. Not, by any means, that we think that Mr. WEBSTER has any thing to apprehend from a free and fair inquiry into the whole of his political life. On the contrary, we have no doubt he would court it. But what we do most decidedly object to is the falsification of history; the misstatement of facts; and the distorting and blurring of the face of such facts as are not wholly misrepresented.

These remarks are suggested by an article which we find in *the New York Express* of Wednesday last, the writer of which has taken the trouble to meet and absolutely extinguish the latest of these incendiary attempts upon the reputation of Mr. WEBSTER. We have a very sensible pleasure in transferring the whole article to our columns. Here it is:

FROM THE NEW YORK EXPRESS OF APRIL 21.

Mr. WEBSTER AND THE LAST WAR.

During the struggles of the last election some parties appear to have explored the Journals of Congress, during the war with England, to find matter of accusation against Mr. Webster.

A letter was published [hereto subjoined] appearing to furnish the result of such examination. Whether this was fair or not, few people could judge, as few have either the means or the leisure of going through so many volumes of public proceedings, and seeing whether the real truth has been extracted or not.

But a friend of ours, in this city, having leisure sufficient, in these dull times, has prepared a statement in answer to the charges in the letter aforesaid.

We now publish the letter and the statement, and, at the request of the writer, we publish part of Mr. Webster's speech, in reply to Mr. Calhoun, March 22d, 1838.

We commend the consideration of these papers not only to the friends of the last administration generally, but in an especial manner to Governor Polk, of Tennessee, who, by newspaper accounts, is already "on the stump," as the Western phrase is, for the next August election.

Instead of discussing subjects of present interest, the worthy and venerable Governor seems to rejoice in discussions relating to bygone times. There appear to be two objects which most attract his Excellency's attention; one to abuse Mr. Clay, who supported the war, and the other to abuse Mr. Webster, who, he says, opposed it.

We hope his Excellency will not omit some notice of the Berlin and Milan decrees, the affair of the Chesapeake, and that he will even take some notice of the *quasi* war with France.

The venerable Governor will see how important it is to enter into these matters, when the questions before the American people are, whether an exhausted Treasury shall be replenished, whether the country shall be defended, and whether any attempt shall be made, by giving a sound currency to the country, to revive business and confidence, and restore public and private credit.

THE LETTER, (REFERRED TO ABOVE.)

SIR: I herewith send you the vote of DANIEL WEBSTER on several occasions, while a member of Congress during the war.

1st. On the 7th January, 1814, he voted against an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the navy.

2d. On the 19th January, 1814, he voted against a proposition more effectually to detect and punish traitors and spies.

3d. On the 25th March, he voted against the bill to call forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union and repel invasion.

4th. On the 1st December, only a few days before the sitting of the *Hartford Convention*, he voted against a bill to provide additional revenue for defraying the expenses of the *Government* and maintaining the public credit.

5th. On the 10th, he voted to postpone indefinitely a bill authorizing the President of the United States to call upon the several States for their respective quotas of militia to defend the frontier against invasion.

6th. On the 13th, against the same bill.

7th. He also voted against a bill to provide additional revenue for the support of Government and the public credit, and also against an appropriation for rebuilding the Capitol, which had been destroyed by the enemy.

The above is taken from the public records at Washington. I could give you more, but the above is enough. Such is the vote of a *Tory*, now called *Whig*. Sorry I am to find you in such company, with such a leader.

[What follows is of a private nature.]

Respectfully yours.

THE STATEMENT.

A true and exact statement of the case, in regard to each of these votes, as appears from the Journals and the printed debates.

The charges are:

I. "On the 7th January, 1814, he voted against an appropriation for defraying the expenses of the navy."

This is exceedingly disingenuous for two reasons:

1st. Because the matter is not accurately stated, nor the reason for the vote given, as that now appears in the debates. A bill had passed the House of Representatives, and without opposition, either on the question of its engrossment or the question of its final passage, "making partial appropriations for the service of 1814." The Senate inserted, as an amendment, an appropriation of *one million of dollars* for the expenses of the Navy. It was quite unusual at that time, and indeed it is believed unprecedented, for the Senate to originate, by way of amendment, such large grants of money for the public service.

On this ground, alone, the amendment was opposed by some who had been the warmest friends of the Navy from the time of General Washington. It was a question of the regularity of proceeding, a question of the order of business, merely. The record shows that NATHANIEL MACON, and other administration men, voted with Mr. Webster on that question, *against* concurring with the Senate in their amendment.

2d. Because it is well known that, throughout the whole war, Mr. Webster

was constantly urging upon Government greater extension of our naval means, and augmented expenditure and augmented efforts on the sea. The Navy had been exceedingly unpopular with the party then in power. This every body knows; and Mr. Webster was attempting to argue it into popularity.

The Journal shows that, on the 8th November, 1814, the House went into committee on the bill from the Senate to authorize the President to build twenty vessels of war to carry a certain number of guns. Mr. Reed moved to increase the number of guns more than twofold for each ship. Mr. WEBSTER voted in the affirmative, but the motion was lost, and the bill then passed without opposition. Doubtless many other votes of this kind may be found in the Journal, for the debates show that Mr. WEBSTER constantly urged the increase of our Naval power as the best means of meeting our enemy, the proudest maritime Power in the world.

In respect, then, to the vote here complained of, the fact is, that it was not a vote against an appropriation to defray the expenses of the Navy, but was a vote against the assumption of the Senate to originate, by way of amendment, large appropriations of money for military service.

It was then, and is now, thought by many, exclusively the legitimate office of the House of Representatives to originate all the principal grants of money for the support of Government. Would it be considered fair to charge Nathaniel Macon and others, the friends of Mr. Madison and distinguished supporters of the war, with a disposition to withhold the means of defending the country, because he and they voted against the extraordinary amendment of the Senate? Certainly not; and, therefore, the same charge now made against Mr. Webster with voting *with Nathaniel Macon* on that question is unfair, if not ridiculous.

II. "On the 10th January, 1814, he voted against a proposition more effectually to detect and punish traitors and spies."

This is absolutely untrue.

On the 19th of January, 1814, Mr. Wright, of Maryland, moved the following resolution:

"*Resolved*, That the Committee of the Whole House be instructed to inquire into the expediency of extending the second section of the act for the Government of the United States relative to spies, *to citizens of the United States*."

The effect of extending the rules and articles of war relative to spies *to citizens of the United States*, would have been to expose every American citizen visiting the encampment of the American army, to be charged with being a spy, and have that charge tried and determined by a drum-head court-martial, and that trial followed by death.

It would have withdrawn from our citizens that great shield of American liberty—the right of trial by jury—and placed the whole country, and all our citizens, at once under martial law. So thought Mr. Webster, and he voted against it. So thought Mr. Cheves and Mr. Farrow, of South Carolina, Mr. Duvall, Mr. Ormsby, and Mr. Clark, of Kentucky, Mr. Eppes, of Virginia, Mr. Kent, of

Maryland, Mr. Seybert, of Pennsylvania, Mr. Fisk, of Vermont, (or New York,) Mr. King, of North Carolina, (now Senator from Alabama, and late President of the Senate,) Mr. Richardson, (late Chief Justice of New Hampshire,) Mr. Robertson, of Louisiana, and many others of the warmest supporters of the Administration of Mr. Madison; and they voted with Mr. Webster: and there is no more truth in this charge against Mr. Webster than in the same charge, should it be made, against Mr. Eppes, the chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, son-in-law of Mr. Jefferson, and leader of the then Democratic party in the House of Representatives.

III. "On the 25th of March he voted against the bill to call forth the militia to execute the laws of the Union and repel invasion."

This is wholly a mistake, or misstatement. The Journal of the 25th of March shows no such question voted upon, or pending.

IV. "On the 1st of December, only a few days before the meeting of the Hartford Convention, he voted against a bill to provide additional revenue for defraying the expenses of the Government, and maintaining the public credit."

This reference to the Hartford Convention is merely for effect, and to make unfair and false impressions, as it is known to all, who are not wilfully ignorant, that Mr. Webster had nothing to do with the Hartford Convention.

The opponents of Mr. Webster have been, again and again, challenged in vain to the proof that he was in any manner connected with the Hartford Convention, its origin, or proceedings. No such proof has been or can be presented. And yet the charge, so falsely made, and so often refuted, continues to be repeated.

As for the rest of the fourth allegation, it only appears that Mr. Webster was in a very small minority against a bill laying taxes on various articles, to some of which taxes there were very serious objections, however important the object, while money could be raised in other modes.

This bill proposed a direct tax upon various articles. It laid duties upon sales at auction, on the postage of letters, on licenses to retail wines, on licenses to retail spirituous liquors and foreign merchandise, on carriages for the conveyance of persons, and on plate, harness, &c. It is but fair to ascribe Mr. Webster's vote against this bill to his objection to the form of some of the taxes, because the Journal shows that a few days before he voted in the affirmative on a proposition to increase other taxes.

The yeas and nays given in the Journal show that the vote on the tax bill referred to was not, by any means, a test of parties, or a party vote—most of the leading Opposition members having voted in the affirmative. The Journal of the 26th of October, 1814, shows that Mr. Webster proposed and voted for some of the taxes provided for by this bill, but, as he disapproved of other taxes contained in it, he voted against the whole bill.

V. "On the 10th, he voted to postpone indefinitely a bill authorizing the President of the United States to call upon the several States for their respective quotas of militia to defend the frontier against invasion."

VI. "On the 13th, he voted against the same bill."

The answer to these stands on the same ground as those to some of the preceding. The reason is not given, but the debate shows a reason, fair and honest at least, whatever may be thought of its strength and validity. Mr. Webster never gave a vote against defending the country, against repelling invasion, or against executing the laws. He was as ready to defend the country as the warmest patriot, and we have seen it stated, what is no doubt true, that when Portsmouth, the town in which he then lived, was supposed to be in danger of an immediate attack by the enemy, he was placed, on the nomination of John Langdon, at the head of a committee raised for its defence.

In Mr. Webster's speech, 21st March, 1838, in reply to Mr. Calhoun, he challenged that gentlemen to show that he ever gave an unpatriotic vote during the war or at any other time. He admitted that, *with Mr. Calhoun*, he had preferred to carry on the war with England *on the ocean*, and had indicated that preference by his votes, as had Mr. Calhoun and others. It is well known that on the occasion referred to, Mr. Calhoun, who has served with Mr. Webster for nearly thirty years in Congress, and who well knew what his votes were during the war, was perfectly silent when this challenge was made.

VII. "He also voted against a bill to provide additional revenue for the support of the Government and the public credit, and also against an appropriation for rebuilding the Capitol, which had been destroyed by the enemy."

The answer given to the fourth charge is the answer to the seventh, except that under the 7th head is contained, also, a very disingenuous charge—that Mr. Webster voted against a bill to provide for the rebuilding of the Capitol after it had been destroyed by the enemy.

The unfairness and falsity of this charge are shown by an examination of the record. The Journal shows the following legislation in respect to rebuilding the Capitol. It is to be remembered, however, that, in consequence of a domestic calamity, Mr. Webster did not take his seat in Congress in 1814 until the 15th day of October. On the 26th September, Mr. Fisk of New York, a distinguished friend of the administration of Mr. Madison, moved for a committee "to inquire into the expediency of removing the seat of Government during the session of Congress to a place of better security and less inconvenience." The motion prevailed: ayes 72, noes 51. This was not a party vote, as the record shows.

On the 3d October the committee reported "that it was *inexpedient*, at this time, to remove the seat of Government," but Mr. Fisk himself moved to amend the report by striking out the word "*inexpedient*," and substituting "expedient." On this motion the vote stood 68 to 68, and the Speaker (Mr. Cheves) declaring himself for the amendment, it was adopted, and the amended resolution was referred to a Committee of the Whole House.

October 4. The order of the day on this subject being called for, Mr. Newton moved its indefinite postponement. This was negatived: yeas 61, nays 77, and not a party vote, as the Journal shows.

October 6. The report of the committee, having been reported back to the

House from the Committee of the Whole House, was taken up; and on the question to agree to it, the vote stood ayes 72 and 71 noes. So the report recommending the removal of the seat of Government from Washington to some more convenient place was agreed to, and a committee was appointed to bring in a bill.

October 13. Mr. Fisk reported a bill for the temporary removal of the seat of Government.

On the 15th October Mr. Webster took his seat for the first time for that session, and on this day the question was taken upon a motion to reject the bill, and it was negatived, ayes 76, noes 79, Mr. Webster voting in the negative; that is to say, he voted against the rejection of a bill, brought in by a leading friend of the Administration, and on which there had been, in no stage of it, a party vote, providing for the removal of the seat of Government from Washington. The bill, not being rejected, was read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House. Being reported back from the committee to the House, it was moved to amend the bill by inserting a section which provided that the President's House and the Capitol should be rebuilt on their former sites in the city of Washington, which was rejected without a division.

In the Committee of the Whole the bill had been amended, and one of the amendments was to name the place to which the Government should be removed. (The place does not appear upon the Journal, but is believed to have been Lancaster, Pennsylvania.) The question then being put upon the engrossment of the bill, it passed in the negative, ayes 74, noes 83. And so the bill was lost. Mr. Webster voted in the affirmative. This was not a party vote; the Northern men generally voted to remove the Government to Lancaster, and the Southern were against it.

The next proceeding that appears upon this subject took place on the 20th October, when Mr. Lewis, of Virginia, (whom Mr. Jefferson called the residuary legatee of all the federalism of the State of Virginia,) moved for a committee to inquire into the expediency of rebuilding the President's House and the Capitol, and the necessary expense for that purpose. The resolution was adopted without objection, and a committee appointed, which reported on the 21st November, and on that day Mr. Lewis obtained leave to bring in a bill making an appropriation for repairing or rebuilding in the city of Washington.

It does not appear that any further proceedings took place in the House in regard to the bill introduced by Mr. Lewis; but on the 8th of February a bill from the Senate, to provide for the rebuilding of the President's House and the Capitol, being under consideration in the House of Representatives, it was moved that no part of the money should be expended until the President laid before Congress a report stating the principles upon which the Capitol, President's House, and the Post Office should be rebuilt, with an estimate of the cost. This motion was rejected. Then Mr. Stanford, of North Carolina, an ardent supporter of the Administration, moved "that the bill be recommitted with instructions to report such change and *plan of construction* of the public buildings as shall comport with the

convenience of the Government." This motion was lost. Mr. Eppes, of Virginia, as appears by his vote, was of opinion that the money ought not to be voted without some kind of change in the old plan of construction, nor without some plan being laid before the House to show *what* the construction was to be, and the expense of it. Mr. Webster was of this opinion also, and on the third reading of the bill there were 67 yeas and 55 nays, and the bill passed. Mr. Webster voted in the negative, and this is the crime he is accused of. Mr. Eppes, the Democratic leader of the House, and chairman of the Committee of Ways and Means, voted with him. Mr. Farrow, of S. C., voted with him, Mr. Kerr, of Va., Mr. Udree, of Pa., Mr. Taylor, of N. Y., Mr. Ingham, of Pa., Mr. Murfree, of N. C., Mr. Williams, of N. C., Mr. Conard, of Pa., Mr. Stanford, of N. C., and other stanch Democrats, voted *with* Mr. Webster, and many of Mr. Webster's political friends voted for the bill.

The truth is, it was no party proceeding, and there was no party vote on it; and all that can be made of it is, that Mr. Webster was not willing to vote away the money of the people until he knew how it was to be laid out and expended, any more than Mr. Eppes.

Every public man knows, all fair-minded men admit, that justice can be done to no man by picking out a vote here and a vote there, and publishing them without their proper connexion, without accurately stating the occasion, and without giving the reason, on which they were founded.

Persevering efforts of this kind have been made against Mr. WEBSTER, many times and by different hands, but thus far without success. The way in which Mr. WEBSTER has himself met them may be learned by the following extracts from his speech in reply to Mr. CALHOUN, on the 22d of March, 1838:

But, sir, before attempting that, he [Mr. CALHOUN] has something else to say. He had prepared, it seems, to draw comparisons himself. He had intended to say something, if time had allowed, upon our respective opinions and conduct in regard to the war. If time had allowed! Sir, time does allow—time must allow. A general remark of that kind ought not to be, cannot be, left to produce its effect, when that effect is obviously intended to be unfavorable. Why did the gentleman allude to my votes, or my opinions, respecting the war at all, unless he had something to say? Does he wish to leave an undefined impression that something was done, or something said by me, not now capable of defence or justification! something not reconcilable with true patriotism! He means that, or nothing. And now, sir, let him bring the matter forth; let him take the responsibility of the accusation; let him state his facts. I am here, this day, to answer. Now is the time, and now is the hour. I think we read, sir, that one of the good spirits would not bring against the arch-enemy of mankind a railing accusation; and what is railing but general reproach—an imputation without fact, time, or

circumstance? Sir, I call for particulars. The gentleman knows my whole conduct well: indeed, the journals show it all, from the moment I came into Congress till the peace. If I have done, then, sir, any thing unpatriotic, any thing which, as far as love of country goes, will not bear comparison with his or any man's conduct, let it now be stated. Give me the fact, the time, the manner. He speaks of the war; that which is called the late war, though it is now twenty-five years since it terminated. He would leave an impression that I opposed it. How? I was not in Congress when war was declared, nor in public life, anywhere. I was pursuing my profession, and keeping company with judges, sheriffs and jurors, and plantiffs and defendants. If I had been in Congress, and had enjoyed the benefit of hearing the honorable gentleman's speeches, for all I can say, I might have concurred with him. But I was not in public life. I never had been for a single hour, and was in no situation, therefore, to oppose or support the declaration of war. I am speaking to the fact, sir; and if the gentleman has any fact, let us know it.

Well, sir, I came into Congress during the war. I found it waged and raging. And what did I do here to oppose it? Look to the journals. Let the honorable gentleman tax his memory. Bring up any thing, if there be any thing to bring up—not showing error of opinion, but showing want of loyalty or fidelity to the country. I did not agree to all that was proposed, nor did the honorable gentleman. I did not approve of every measure, nor did he.

The war had been preceded by the restrictive system and the embargo. As a private individual, I certainly did not think well of these measures. It appeared to me the embargo annoyed us as much as our enemies, while it destroyed the business and cramped the spirits of the People.

In this opinion I may have been right or wrong, but the gentleman was himself of the same opinion. He told us the other day, as a proof of his independence of party, on great questions, that he differed with his friends on the subject of the embargo He was decidedly and unalterably opposed to it. It furnishes, in his judgment, therefore, no imputation either on my patriotism or the soundness of my political opinions that I was opposed to it also. I mean opposed in opinion; for I was not in Congress, and had nothing to do with the act creating the embargo. And as to opposition to measures for carrying on the war, after I came into Congress, I again say, let the gentleman specify—let him lay his finger on any thing, calling for an answer, and he shall have an answer.

Mr. President, you were yourself in the House during a considerable part of this time. The honorable gentleman may make a witness of you. He may make a witness of any body else. He may be his own witness. Give us but some fact, some charge, something capable in itself either of being proved or disproved. Prove any thing not consistent with honorable and patriotic conduct, and I am ready to answer it. Sir, I am glad this subject has been alluded to in a manner which justifies me in taking public notice of it; because I am well aware that, for ten years past, infinite pains have been taken to find something, in the range

of these topics, which might create prejudice against me in the country. The Journals have all been pored over and the reports ransacked, and scraps of paragraphs and half sentences have been collected, put together in the falsest manner, and then made to flare out as if there had been some discovery. But all this failed. The next resort was to supposed correspondence. My letters were sought for, to learn if, in the confidence of private friendship, I had never said any thing which an enemy could make use of. With this view the vicinity of my former residence has been searched, as with a lighted candle. New Hampshire has been explored from the mouth of the Merrimack to the White Hills. In one instance a gentleman had left the State, gone five hundred miles off, and died. His papers were examined, a letter was found, and, I have understood, it was brought to Washington; a conclave was held to consider it, and the result was, that if there was nothing else against Mr. Webster, the matter had better be left alone. Sir, I hope to make every body of that opinion who brings against me a charge of a want of patriotism. Errors of opinion can be found, doubtless, on many subjects; but as such conduct flows from the feelings which animate the heart, I know that no act of my life has had its origin in the want of ardent love of country.

Sir, when I came to Congrsss, I found the honorable gentleman a leading member of the House of Representatives. Well, sir, in what did we differ? One of the first measures of magnitude, after I came here, was Mr. Dallas's proposition for a bank. It was a war measure. It was urged as being absolutely necessary to enable Government to carry on the war. Government wanted revenue; such a bank, it was hoped, would furnish it, and on that account it was warmly pressed and urged on Congress. You remember all this, Mr. President. You remember how much some persons supposed the success of the war and salvation of the country depended on carrying that measure. Yet the honorable member from South Carolina opposed that bill. He now takes to himself a good deal of merit—none too much, but still a good deal of merit—for having defeated it. Well, sir, I agreed with him. It was a mere paper bank—a mere machine for fabricating irredeemable paper. It was a new form for paper money; and, instead of benefiting the country, I thought it would plunge it deeper and deeper in difficulty. I made a speech on the subject; it has often been quoted. There it is; let whoever pleases read and examine it. I am not proud of it for any ability it exhibits; on the other hand, I am not ashamed of it for the spirit which it manifests. But, sir, I say again, the gentleman himself took the lead against this measure—this darling measure of the Administration. I followed him; if I was seduced into error, or into unjustifiable opposition, there sits my seducer.

What, sir, were other leading sentiments, or leading measures of that day? On what other subjects did men differ? The gentleman has adverted to one, and that a most important one—I mean the Navy. He says, and says truly, that at the commencement of the war the Navy was unpopular. It was unpopular with his friends, who then controlled the politics of the country. But he says he differed with his friends; in this respect he resisted party influence and party con-

nexion, and was the friend and advocate of the Navy. Sir, I commend him for it. He showed his wisdom. That gallant little Navy soon fought itself into favor, and showed that a man who had placed reliance on it had not been disappointed.

Well, sir, in all this, I was exactly of the same opinion as the honorable gentleman.

Sir, I do not know when my opinion of the importance of a naval force to the United States had its origin. I can give no date to my sentiments on this subject, because I never entertained different sentiments. I remember, sir, that immediately after coming into my profession, at a period when the Navy was most unpopular, when it was called by all sorts of hard names, and designated by many coarse epithets, on one of those occasions on which young men address their neighbors I ventured to put forth a boy's hand in defence of the Navy. I insisted on its importance, its adaptation to our circumstances and to our national character, and its indispensable necessity, if we intended to maintain and extend our commerce. These opinions and sentiments I brought into Congress; and, so far as I remember, it was the first, or among the first times, in which I presumed to speak on the topics of the day, that I attempted to urge on the House a greater attention to the naval service. There were divers modes of prosecuting the war. On these modes, or on the degree of attention and expense which should be bestowed on each, different men held different opinions. I confess I looked with most hope to the results of naval warfare, and therefore I invoked Government to invigorate and strengthen that arm of the national defence. I invoked it to seek its enemies upon the seas—to go where every auspicious indication pointed, and where the whole heart and soul of the country would go with it.

Sir, we were at war with the greatest maritime power on earth. England had gained an ascendancy on the seas over the whole combined Powers of Europe. She had been at war twenty years. She had tried her fortunes on the continent, but generally with no success. At one time the whole continent had been closed against her. A long line of armed exterior, an unbroken hostile array frowned upon her from the Gulf of Archangel, round the promontory of Spain and Portugal, to the foot of the boot of Italy. There was not a port which an English ship could enter. Every where on the land the genius of her great enemy had triumphed. He had defeated armies, crushed coalitions, and overturned thrones; but, like the fabled giant, he was unconquerable only while he touched the land. On the ocean he was powerless. That field of fame was his adversary's, and her meteor flag was streaming in triumph all over it.

To her maritime ascendancy England owed every thing, and we were now at war with her. One of the most charming of her poets has said of her, that

> "Her march is o'er the mountain wave,
> "Her home is on the deep."

Now, sir, since we were at war with her, I was for intercepting this march; I was for calling upon her, and paying our respects to her at home; I was for giving her to know that we, too, had a right of way over the seas, and that our marine

officers and our sailors were not entire strangers on the bosom of the deep; I was for doing something more with our navy than to keep it on our shores, for the protection of our own coasts and our own harbors; I was for giving play to its gallant and burning spirit; for allowing it to go forth upon the seas, and encounter on an open and an equal field, whatever the proudest or the bravest of the enemy could bring against it. I knew the character of its officers, and the spirit of its seamen; and I knew that, in their hands, though the flag of the country might go down to the bottom, while they went with it, yet that it could never be dishonored or disgraced.

Since she was our enemy—and a most powerful enemy—I was for touching her, if we could, in the very apple of her eye; for reaching the highest feather in her cap; for clutching at the very brightest jewel in her crown. There seemed to me to be a peculiar propriety in all this, as the war was undertaken for the redress of maritime injuries alone. It was a war declared for free trade and sailor's rights. The ocean, therefore, was the proper theatre for deciding this controversy with our enemy, and on that theatre my ardent wish was that our own power should be concentrated to the utmost.

So much, sir, for the war, and for my conduct and opinions as connected with it. And, as I do not mean to recur to this subject often, or ever, unless indispensably necessary, I repeat the demand for any charge, any accusation, any allegation whatever, that throws me behind the honorable gentleman, or behind any other man, in honor, in fidelity, in devoted love to that country, in which I was born, which has honored me, and which I serve. I, who seldom deal in defiance, now, here, in my place, boldly defy the honorable member to put his insinuation in the form of a charge, and to support that charge by any proof whatever.

W 73

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